

My Bearish Life

Adam David Bencomo

MFA Thesis

Photographic and Electronic Media 2017

Director: Timothy Druckrey







INTRODUCTION

My Bearish Life is a photographic body of work that was created out of the realization that I, Adam David Bencomo can be both an artist and a gay artist. Becoming part of a graduate program would be the catalyst and the launch to what would be my thesis known as *My Bearish Life*. I have been taking images of this community since 2008, but I took a focused approach in 2016 as I allowed myself to give an audience a view not only into my life, but into the bear community within my reach. I began documenting the community photographically, but I have also begun to show different ephemera alongside the work to further conversation that begins with the images. I have made a journey to dive into this project, and it is not ending with the conclusion of my time at graduate school. It will be ongoing until I no longer participate in the bear community (which I do not see ending). However, I see this being part of a larger story that encompasses the LGBTQIAP+ community, but for now, it is *My Bearish Life*.



ABOUT THE ARTIST AS A HOMOSEXUAL MALE



I am a Latinx, non-binary, cisgender, homosexual male. I have been exploring my sexuality deeply since I came out in January of 2009. When I came out, I joined a community within the LGBTQIAP+ world known as the Brotherhood of Bears or colloquially identified as the bear community. My previous partner had joined the community, and I became part of it by proximity. I never realized that this opportunity would eventually help define my identity and mold my confidence at times, and yet it would also destroy who I once thought I was as well. It has, in a way, become a large part of the foundation of who I am. This gave me a reason to look introspectively and allowed *My Bearish Life* to grow.

I began looking through photographs I had taken previously. I saw a common thread within them, and at first I resisted making art about my identity as a homosexual. This was something I resisted as I did not want it define me as an artist, but as time has moved forward, I have reconciled this notion. I am an artist, and I am a homosexual. Whether I am an artist or a gay artist to my artist to my audience no longer matters to me, as I now find empowerment in the labels others have bestowed upon me. This was another reason *My Bearish Life* has come to fruition.



My Bearish Life helped me realize that I am more than just a homosexual. However, some key moments have formed me as an LGBTQIAP+ individual. Attending gay pride events has been a realization that being gay is not a spectacle. It is a celebration. Marginalized people are seeing a time where equality is becoming more and more of a reality. When I began forming various relationships with others whether it be platonic,

sexual, intimate or a mixture of all of these, I never knew that excitement, thrill, love, passion, pain and fury could have such a strong effect on my emotions. Some became the foundation of what I now call a family, and the betrayal of others was absolutely demolishing. This is what life brings to everyone. There are positive and negative situations that humans will get into, but it is how we as individuals react that can change us. Hopefully, we react with care and compassion. This is what can move us forward as a species. Care and compassion are a few of the threads that I have woven into this project of *My Bearish Life*.

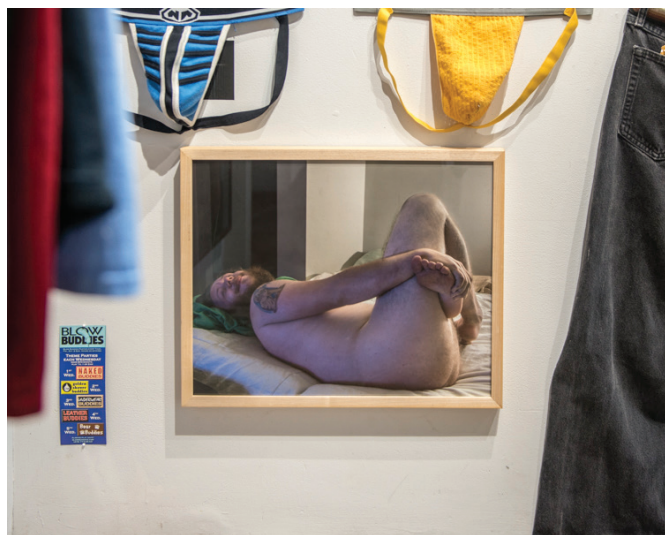
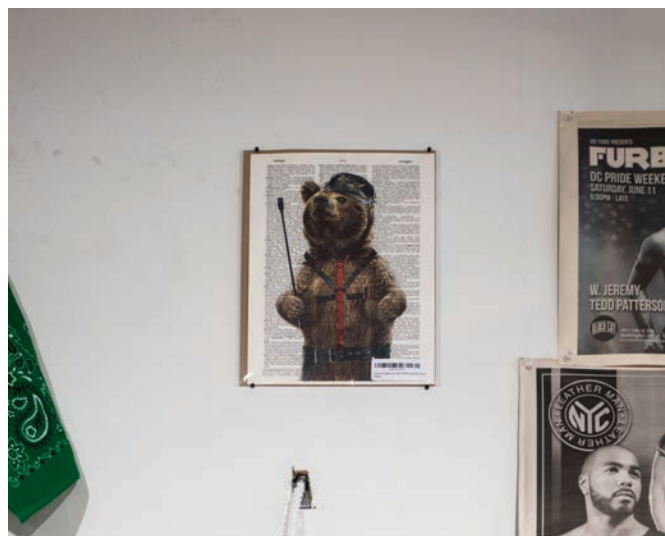
When positive emotions come, it is usually at the price of something horrific. When I heard about the shooting at the Pulse, I realized then that it was imperative to show the world love through my art process. At times, there will be glimpses of edginess and roughness, but at the core there will always be this realization of compassion. As a community, LGBTQIAP+ individuals may or may not have been marginalized, but marginalization happens daily. I am working hard as both an artist and activist to ensure this comes to an end. This is why I started photographing the bear community with intention. I wanted to show that these people are humans. They do not deserve to be mistreated due to their sexual orientation. They deserve equality. I am showing their humanity and demonstrating that they deserve to have equal an opportunity as every human does.











CATALYST AND FOCUS FOR MY BEARISH LIFE



I was headed to an event that involved driving with friends to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This event centered around snow tubing. However, beyond tubing, the event was focused on hanging out together, getting to know one another, and in most cases drinking. There were varying levels of flirtation often leading to sexual activity in many forms. In many ways, these events become ritualistic. However, at the core it is about gaining knowledge of each other with the hopes of friendship without complications. Sex may be involved, but if it does not include unhealthy attachment then it can be can flourish into great relationships. The snow tubing event can be a great example of this. It originally began as a few friends going snow tubing and eventually started inviting more guests. It has now evolved into one of the more informal events of the bear community, but it has grown quite large to where the majority of the host hotel is booked by the bears attending this event. This is an example of the many events that have happened and continue to occur throughout the bear community across the planet. I have attended many of these events, and I will continue to do so.

Alongside with gaining friends by attending the events, I have gained friends by going to bear bars or even LGBTQIAP+ themed bars. I have made really close connections that are equivalent to those of family ties for me. There are many common sayings like, “blood is thicker than water” and “there is no place like home.” These are meant to emphasize that the bonds of family are unlike any other in strength. Unfortunately, this is not always the case when it comes to those identifying as LGBTQIAP+. There are situations where family may feel uncomfortable with a person’s identification, but there are also other extreme situations where family

will cut ties with that family member as well. There is a spectrum from full acceptance to extreme rejection. This is one of the many reasons why this community is still marginalized in many ways. Personally speaking, I do not have an accepting family. My parents have given me everything. I believe they are perfect in every way except not accepting me being a homosexual. In the future, there is hope that this will not happen. I am reminded that while I am at school, I have found safety and care, but with my family I have not. RuPaul, an icon within the current LGBTQIAP+ community said, “You know, we as gay people get to choose our family... we are a family here.” (RuPaul’s Drag Race, Season 5, Episode 7) He is correct. Sometimes, our family is not the strongest bond that we will have, but our chosen family will help us through many tough moments in our lives. This is what I mean when not only the bear community can be like a family, but anyone can be a family. We are marginalized community – at least we are for now. Together, we can stand strong and move forward.







ARTISTIC INFLUENCES

There are artists that have influenced my work and my process in how I have created my images. Nan Goldin's style of art was one that I looked to in order to be able to get close to the subjects of my images. She photographed her life, and her friends knew she was always photographing. That's what I wanted to do. So, in many ways this pushed me out of my comfort zone, by making me talk to my subjects, even if I did not know very well. However, this also gave me a way to get closer to my subjects as.

This led to me looking at other artists categorized as "queer artists." Other artists that I am aware of are Dutes Miller, Alan Charlesworth, Mickey Aloisio, James Gobel, Jess T. Dugan, and Nayland Blake. I have looked to most of these artists in ways of inspiration. I wanted to add to their conversation about queer contemporary art. That said, I formed a specific vernacular around my images and around the rest of the work I have shown. There are direct sexual references, but within my images I have chosen to keep a level of friendliness and tenderness. There is a choice where hypersexual content have been left out. I have chosen to refrain from showing hypersexual content, and this became part of the choices I made for *My Bearish Life*.









METHODOLOGY

The first exhibition for this body of work was in the First-Year Juried show at Maryland Institute College of Art. With this exhibition, I wanted there to be what would look like a wall of posters and images purposely printed for a one-time use. I emphasized this by stapling the images to the wall. I did not frame the images, and I did not use protection to keep the images from getting damaged. I tried to hang them randomly. However, after installing the work, it still presented in a very organized manner from which I would further experiment.

Working in my studio, I decided to add a few elements to the grouping of images. I kept the images from the first installation despite me originally planning on using them once. The staple holes and rips left behind I felt were a great addition to the work, so I kept experimenting. However, I decided to add t-shirts typically worn within the community, and I also added some lanyards, a belt, suspenders, and a small collection of bear advertising. This was just a mock-up, but the overwhelming feeling that came from this installation was exciting for me. However, I felt that the pieces of the overall project needed to be dissected so the audience could take time with the different aspects of this community that I was showing. So, I worked on the dissection of this project.

As I started exhibiting portions of what would be a larger body of work, I also took into consideration a performative aspect to the work. For exhibition openings, artist panels and artist talks where I talked about *My Bearish Life*, I decided to wear an outfit I would wear either out to a bear bar or a bear run. Essentially, I

treated it as an opportunity where I knew I would meet other bears in the community. I will continue to do so in the future too. Though, as I have mentioned earlier that the leather community has a lot of cross-over

In future exhibitions, I chose to work with changes of hanging the work outside the norm in different ways, varying the methods of hanging the work, and selecting different items to show. Ultimately, I had completely dissected the original work and arranged it into thematic groupings, but the work felt too dissected, so my response to this mock-up was to find ways to weave the projects together. This is ultimately what led to my thesis presentation.

During thesis show installation process, I began by installing my jockstraps. I hung them at my waist level. During my talk I stopped in front of them to emphasize that these were my jockstraps. In the midst of the line of jockstraps, one of the breaks was an upside down jock with socks above it. The socks had the text, “FUCK MY SOCKS OFF” written upon them and were also upside down. I had measured my legs in the position of my legs being bent while having intercourse. The other breaks included swimwear and some pants with a jockstrap peering out as if I were wearing it for others to see. I also had the hanky code flagged in my pants as well.

I installed a clothing bar where I hung my personal t-shirts that I had gathered from bear events and other LGBTQIAP+ resources. The shirts were hung at my height, just like the jockstraps – a register of my body. I hung the flags at the highest point of the installation, as flags should be flown high in pride. I





strategically hung the photographs in the frames at different levels so that there would be a bouncing flow throughout the installation. The installation included various groups of flyers hung throughout the space. They were mostly placed by category, but there was a flyer on the pedestal that had a mouth on it. This was hung at my crotch level. I also chose to include photographs on an adhesive paper called LexJet. Some were hung behind the clothes with the edges peeking out so the viewers would be inclined to touch the clothes and move them. With that, they could see this easter egg. I had other easter eggs hidden throughout the installation including Pride sunglasses behind the bear flag, a framed piece saying “Your Make-Up is Terrible” which was referencing a drag queen named Alaska Thunderfuck 5000 was behind the leather pride flag, there was a LexJet photo placed on the bottom side of one of the shelves, a LexJet photo behind a jockstrap, a temporary tattoo hung behind another jockstrap, and there were some LexJet photos pushed into crevices that were not necessarily hidden, but given privacy. I was given gifts from others with bears on it with the knowledge of what it meant though they do not identify as being part of the bear community. They support me. I installed these objects throughout the piece as well. There were also three door hangers that I hung as well. Having both sides showing was a difficult task, but I used binder clips without the wire grasp. I pinned the binding part to the wall with map pins and put the pieces in the clip. This was very satisfying. I was also searching for wooden shelves that were not necessarily polished to use to show some of the objects. I wanted

a raw feeling, but I kept finding a mix between too raw or too finished until I saw the wood a friend used, and he was able to give me enough for two shelves. It was perfect.

Bear marketing was integrated throughout the exhibition which included the previously mentioned flyers, but also postcards, business cards, newspaper ads, magazine ads and articles, and calendars. Another personal aspect of the piece included the lanyards I had collected from bear events. Within the personal aspect, I had taken many images, but I did not know how to portray the secondary images, even though I knew they added to the story. I decided to put them in a photo album, an appropriate place as I consider this community to be my family, as mentioned previously. This use of a familial-seeming photo album re-emphasizes how personal this project was for me, but also the closeness I feel to the community that I portray. There were other pieces I included: for instance the bear documentary, certain pieces of bear decor like a “Bear Xing” sign, a leather bear print on dictionary paper, and lastly bear figurines which I used for my business cards and postcards for the exhibition. All of these items were woven together with three-dimensional aspects, photographic aspects, and tactile aspects. These were all very important to me. This interweaving has formed the future possibilities of this project. I will continue to explore various mediums moving forward to add to my art processes.









PREVIOUS EXHIBITIONS AND STUDIES

The first exhibition for this body of work was in the First-Year Juried show at Maryland Institute College of Art. With this exhibition, I wanted there to be what would look like a wall of posters/images purposely printed for a one time use. I used a mixture of laserjet prints and inkjet prints and tried to haphazardly hang the images on the wall. I was originally satisfied with the first attempt of this installation. However upon looking back, I would add more larger images and try to keep a grid inadvertently from forming. I did enjoy using the staples to install the images though and think that aspect turned out well.

The next exhibition I showed the work was called isolation/ostracization, a group show based on awkwardness and anxiety. I showed an image I had taken at a bear gathering event where I was overlooking from a hotel balcony to a group of bears below. The image was one of longing and isolating. I hung the photo near a baseboard with an off-center border. I also chose to hang the photo with multiple types of pins to increase the awkwardness of the install. This allowed the print to curl, a result I wanted.

The Photographic and Electronic Media exhibition introduced a new part of the conversation to my work. I explored what digital communication would be like if it were transformed into a tactile context. On bear social media, I had interacted with men who had sent me articles of clothing (specifically speedos and jockstraps) and had asked me to model in the clothing for them. I did, but rather than giving them cell phone images like they expected, I shot them with my Nikon D800 Camera and produced higher quality image setups. This challenged and enhanced the norm of social dynamics in bear social media, but it also alluded to

a relatively common interaction, ubiquitous due to the ease of this form of communication. In the exhibition, I showed my favorite image from each shoot with each article of clothing, the sender's favorite image, and the package with the clothing inside. Additionally, I chose to contextualize the project more with the labels. I was satisfied with this experiment and the slight tangent to my main project it offered me.

I was in a few group exhibitions where I chose to exhibit portions of the project. The exhibition Beauty, Etc. at Stevenson University included only framed images which I would eventually include in my thesis in a larger quantity. With this exhibition, I had the opportunity to take part in an artist panel at the opening reception. In another exhibition, I showed a piece I created called "Hanky Code" which I decided to include in my thesis as well. I was given the opportunity to exhibit a piece I called Jockstrap Fetish in another group exhibition. All of these were essentially small dissections of the larger project. I discovered that the pieces have the ability to be flexible when separated from the larger project as well as being successful as a single large installation. These were the final steps leading up to the installation for my thesis at Current Space Gallery.







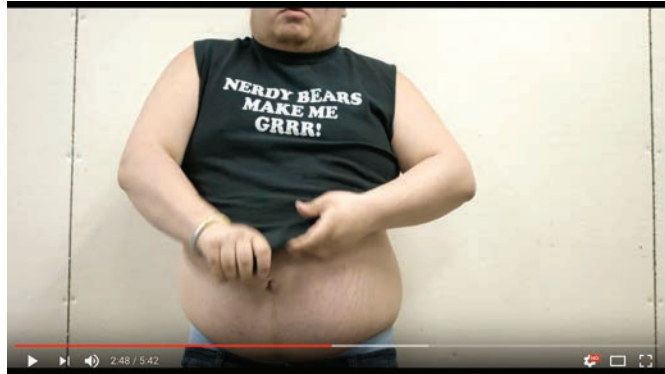
VIDEO EXPLORATION

As an artist, I am growing not only in refining my craft, but I am also integrating more mediums into my process. I experimented with making a video for *My Bearish Life*. The video was about getting ready to go out to a bear bar. The process that I go through to get ready to go out changes, but through this video, I wanted to portray not only ways that I may get ready, but ways that others may get ready to go as well. However, this video is a personal one, and all of the touches were that. In graduate school, the bar I attended the most was down the street from the graduate studio center. I would get ready there numerous times which is why it was the setting for my video. All of the clothing in the video was mine. All of these factors came into how I would get ready for the bar.

After making the video and evaluating the end result, I will probably reshoot the it. There are elements that I can include now that I did not before. The setting of the video will probably change to be more familiar with an audience. Even though it was personal to me, the setting of getting ready at home is more common and relatable. Additionally, I get ready differently depending on the night. Showing variety of ways I get ready may also show more of the story. I debated on showing this as part of my thesis installation, but I ultimately left it out. For now, this is *Getting Ready for the Bear Bar*.

(Source: <https://youtu.be/DEg2Y9Efklk>)











ITEMS EXHIBITED IN CURRENT SPACE

- 20 Archival Pigment Prints
 - 16 Framed Images at 16" x 20"
 - 1 Unframed Image at 8" x 10"
 - 2 Unframed Poster Prints at 16" x 20"
 - 2 Unframed Images at 4" x 6"
 - 3 Unframed Images for Bear Social Networks at Various sizes
- 15 LexJet Prints
 - 5 Images at 4" x 5"
 - 8 Images at 8" x 10"
 - 2 Images at 16" x 20"
- 1 Photo Album with 186 Prints at 4" x 6"
- 42 Flyers of Advertisement
- 2 Flags
 - 1 Bear Pride Flag owned by J.J. Suffron.
 - 1 Leather Pride Flag
- 4 Books of Bear Literature
- 1 Bear Napkin Holder (for postcards)
- 1 Bear Business Card Holder
- 24 Postcards in Advertisements
- 2 Calendars
- 14 Mardi Gras Beads from the Baltimore Eagle Masquerade
- 1 Bunny Ears Headband from Bear Easter Night at the Green Lantern
- 2 Lighters
 - 1 Bear Lighter donated by Alexis Novak
 - 1 Red, White and Black lighter previously owned by J.J. Suffron
- 1 "Love Bears All Things" Art gifted by Liz Faust and Kei Ito
- 1 Framed "Your Makeup is Terrible" Art decor gifted by James Coonce
- 1 Art Print of Leather Bear on Dictionary Page
- 1 Bear Crossing Sign
- 1 Bear Documentary DVD and Case
- 1 Bear Sticker gifted by Jordan Kyler
- 1 Cali Cub Sticker
- 1 Bear Pride Bumper Sticker
- 1 Bear Post-It gifted by Anita Zheng
- 1 Pair of Pride Glasses
- 7 Lanyards
- 3 TBRU (Texas Bear Round-Up) Pins
- 6 Buttons at 1" in diameter
- 4 Pieces of Swimwear
- 12 Jockstraps
- 13 Wristbands from paying cover at the Baltimore Eagle.
- 3 Door Hangers
- 1 Pair of Socks
- 1 Pair of Black Denim Jeans
- 1 Pair of Bear Pride Suspenders
- 1 Bear Pride Belt
- 14 Bandanas for the Hanky Code
- 1 Bear Towel gifted by my parents without knowing the implications of the bear symbol.
- 5 Pieces of Newsprint Advertisement
- 8 Small Cards
- 5 Business Cards
- 2 Lyft Advertisement Cards
- 1 Gift Card
- 19 Shirts
- 2 Magazine Spreads
- 4 Bear Run Booklets
- 2 Wooden Shelves with materials gifted by Johnathan E. Baker

TOTAL ITEMS: 254





GALLERY TALK

I was given the opportunity to give an artist talk at the Current Space Gallery during the run of my thesis show. This was the first real artist talk I have given. For my artist talk, I outlined my background and where I find myself in the LGBTQIAP+ community, my personal background with respect to coming out as a homosexual, my change in artistry, my art practice, graduate school from where I started to my thesis, a focus on *My Bearish Life*, my installation process and methodology, and the future of the project. As I walked into the talk, I welcomed everyone. I proceeded to change out of the shirt I wore, which was not directly related to the art to one of the shirts in my exhibition. I gave the talk while placing myself in specific positions in the gallery. I stood in front of my jockstraps and stopped. I showed that my jocks were hung at my waist level. I stood in front of the clothing bar to show the shirts at also hung at my height. I went into many details throughout the talk. Prior to the closing of my talk, I told a short story about my friend J.J., and I said the project is dedicated to him. I closed the talk by opening the floor with questions. Once the questions were over, the event concluded.



LOCATION:
 Current Space Gallery
 421 North Howard Street
 Baltimore, Maryland

DATE AND TIME:
 Friday, April 28, 2017 at 1:00 PM





PRESS

There were two articles written about all of the MICA graduate thesis shows around Baltimore. The articles were divided by the days of reception. Most galleries had their reception on Friday, April 21, 2017. The other galleries (which included the *My Bearish Life* exhibition) were on Saturday, April 22, 2017. Below is the except from the article, including the images from the BmoreArt article:



Adam David Bencomo's works in Current Space.

MICA Uses Creative Spaces for MFA Thesis Shows

“Current space held mini-installations by Alexis Novak – Photographic and Electronic Media, Adam David Bencomo – Photographic and Electronic Media and Hamida Khatri of Community Arts...

Photographic and Electronic Media candidate Adam David Bencomo hung his work salon-style in his space at current, countering Khatri's comparatively sparse adjacent walls. “My Bearish Life” is a collection of work that aims to humanize sexually and gender-marginalized groups through celebration rather than shaming. Bencomo's statement also encourages the idea that communities can act as surrogate families within the groups represented.

Before his MFA at MICA, Bencomo also received a BA in Religious Studies from the University of New Mexico with a concentration in Architectural History and Studio Art. This educational commitment suggests a well-rounded and informed point of view that traditionally could be perceived (in conservative circles) as running counter to the groups he is representing in his thesis show. For Bencomo's work this also deepens the ways that communities can exist within certain social circles, religious or otherwise.”

(Source: <http://www.bmoreart.com/2017/04/mica-uses-creative-spaces-for-mfa-thesis-shows.html>)









GLOSSARY

BEAR - Burley or husky person covered in body hair that typically has a beard or at least some form of facial hair.

BEAR BAR - Gay bar for the bear community.

BEAR CUB / CUB - Tends to be younger or young at heart. Can be hairy or smooth. Can be more sexually passive. However, cub is not always identifying all of these traits.

BEAR RUN - A gathering for the bear community and their admirers where they socialize with intensity. Usually, but not always involves the consumption of lots of food and alcohol. Includes TBRU (Texas Bear Round Up).

BEARRACUDA - Popular dance party for the bear community that travels around the world.

BELLY RUBS - A typical action many people in the community either like to do or like to receive.

BOTTOM - The person who tends to be more sexually passive or receiving. Can be, but not always more submissive.

CHASER - A person who does not identify as a bear, cub, otter, etc., but does identify as being attracted to members of the bear community and therefore finding a place in the community.

CHUB - A person who may or may not have a lot of body hair but is considerably larger in body mass. This usually means the person has a big belly. Depending on other aspects, a person could identify as a muscle chub if they have a muscular body structure alongside a big belly, or could be identified as a super chub whose belly could be considered excessively large.

CISGENDER - The term used for a person who identifies as the gender they were assigned at birth.

CUT - Slang for a circumcised penis.

DADDY / DADDY BEAR - Tends to be older, but not always. The “dad bod” (being husky and/or stocky in stature) is typically a physical indication of a daddy bear.

GROWLr - Bear social media for dating, chatting, sexting, and hooking up. Similar to Scruff.

GRRR - Complimentary bear greeting for other bears.

HANKY CODE - The use of handkerchiefs/ bandanas to represent certain sexual acts or fetishes that a person is into. Originally indicating top/ bottom, aggressive/passive, or pitcher/receiver. Left was the top and right was the bottom. The use of color indicated different acts like anal sex, oral sex, piercing, etc. The hanky code in many areas was expanded upon to reflect numerous options. However, there is a general code and a more extensive code depending on your geographical location.

KINKY - Deviation from vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse and oral intercourse which may include public sex, sex toys, fetishes, a combination of these, and more.

LATINX - A gender neutral term for Latina/Latino.

LEATHER COMMUNITY - This is a community that tends to focus on the fetish of leather and wearing it as part of a way to attract others with this fetish. It is definitely sexually driven but may not always be physical. However, it is not exclusive to leather and has expanded to being open to an unlimited amount of fetishes.

LGBTQIAP+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (and Transexual), Queer (and Questioning), Intersex, Asexual (and Ally, Agender, Aromantic), Pansexual (and Pangender, Panromantic, Polysexual), and + which is to not exclude any other personal identity but to encompass an overall inclusivity.

NONBINARY - In accordance to gender, this is acknowledging that there are more gender variances past male and female. Although, this does mean that transgendered people automatically identify as nonbinary and that cisgendered people are binary. Increasingly so, nonbinary is being used to show the inclusivity of other gender identities alongside the male and female genders.

OTTER - Skinnier version of a bear. Still very hairy.

PIG - More commonly known as a sex pig. A person who engages in kinky sexual acts.

POZ - Slang used to describe a person who is HIV+. Some will use the term Poz-Friendly to indicate that they are willing to be sexually involved with someone who is HIV+. They may or may not be HIV+ as well.

PUP - Included in the leather community by assuming the role of a puppy dog including barking and obedience. Pups tend to have a master who they obey, but they can also be alpha pups to others as well.

SCRUFF - Bear social media for dating, chatting, sexting, and hooking up. Similar to GROWLr.

TOP - The person who tends to be more sexually aggressive or giving. Can be, but not always more dominant.

TRANSBEAR - Typically a Female-to-Male transgender who identifies as a bear.

TRANSCUB - Typically a Female-to-Male transgender who identifies as a bear cub / cub.

UNCUT - Slang for an uncircumcised penis.

VANILLA - Refers to having vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, and oral intercourse without much deviation from the act itself.

W BEAR - Bear social media similar to Instagram, but also includes private pictures alongside with the ability to chat, sext, compliment and hook up as well.

WOLF - Older otter specifically with grey hair.

WOOF - Complimentary bear greeting for other bears.









THE FUTURE

The exhibition of the current status of the project was a success. I discovered the threads of the project while attending the Maryland Institute College of Art, but it started beforehand, and I do not see an end for it in sight. I will continue collecting all the kinds of things that I have collected thus far, but I am looking to attend bear events that I have not previously attended and make images there. Additionally, I hope to travel internationally and go to events across the world as the bear community is vast. Additionally, I see this project becoming part of an overall story. My work is becoming more about the LGBTQIAP+ community rather than just a subculture inside of it. I will also begin to work with other media and see how that affects the story within my work. *My Bearish Life* has a strong lifeline in the future.







IMAGE LIST

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Previous Exhibition Documentation
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Artist Panel Documentation
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Getting Ready for the Bear Bar Screen Captures
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My Bearish Life Gallery Talk Documentation
(Credit: Andrew Paul Keiper)
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Images of J.J. Suffron included in *My Bearish Life*
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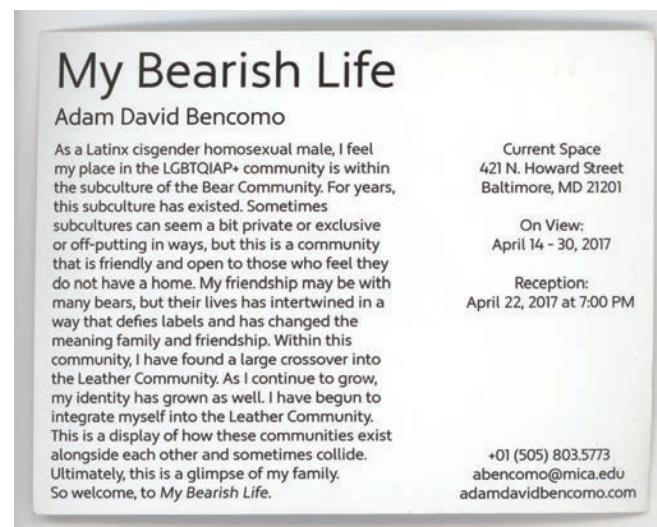
My Bearish Life Pigment Prints Exhibited
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Page 16 "I Have a Harness" 2016

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Page 73 "Male Order Exchange: My Choice 03" 2016

* - All images and documentation are made by Adam David Bencomo unless otherwise noted.

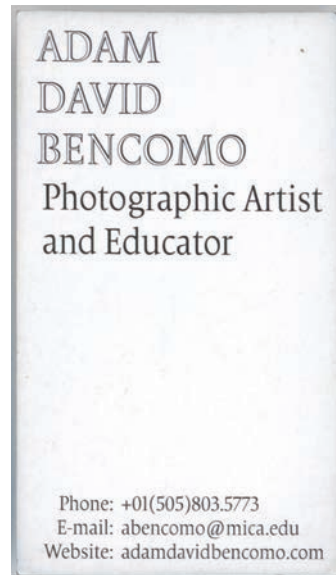
EXHIBITION TAKEAWAYS: POSTCARDS

My postcards had three select images. I included a working version of my artist statement. They also included the gallery address. I ordered 25 of each image totaling to 75. Images are not to scale.



EXHIBITION TAKEAWAYS: BUSINESS CARDS

I chose two images for my business cards. I ordered a surplus to be able to use them after the exhibition as well. However, I also did not want to run out. I ordered 250 cards. Images are not to scale.



MY SUPPORT IS INCREDIBLY APPRECIATED

My PEM family at MICA has been overwhelmingly amazing. I was thankful for the Class of 2016 for mentoring us as we arrived, and Class of 2017 was such a wonderful group that I can call family. Good luck to Class of 2018. Thank you to my director, Tim and the faculty Patrick, Laura, Mark, and James.

I have had great support from my friends and family back home. Whitney, Jon, Yuri, Chris, Raab, J.J. cheered me on as I left the clutches of the Land of Entrapment. Of course, I had others on my side as well, and I give them many thanks.

To my wonderful parents: Though you may disagree with the subject of my art, you still want me to be a successful artist and educator. Thank you to my parental units.

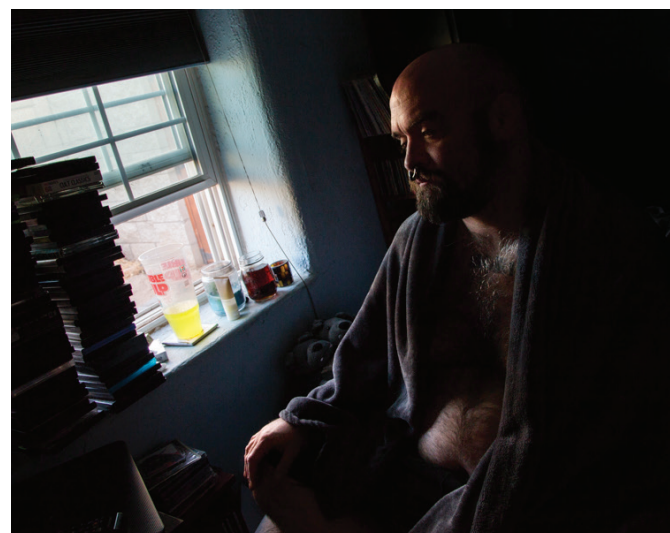
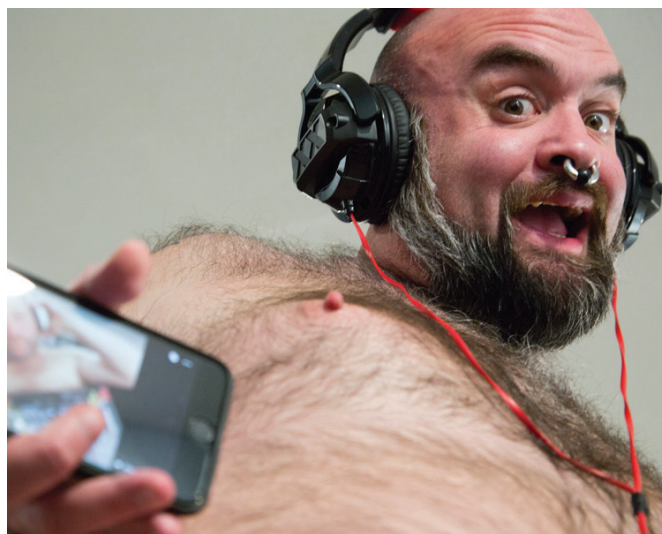
To my mentors Jay Gould and Nate Larson: You have reminded me that teaching is so exciting. Watching students grow and get excited about what they learned is the best reward. Thank you for being awesome.

To those who contributed by giving me bear items: You had a hand in my art, and I am forever thankful.

To my exhibition installation team: The encouragement was awesome. The provision of rides and food meant more to me than you know. Nicole Helegda, Andrew Paul Keiper, Hamida Khatri, Alexis Novak, Beth Yashnyk you were my lifelines throughout the installation process.

This is part of my drive to continue to do my best as an artist and an educator for the future!





🍦 - This emoji represents ice cream.
 ❤️ - This emoji represents love.
 🐾 - This emoji represents a monster.
 🐶 - This emoji represents a poodle.
 Poodle is a nickname given to Adam from J.J.
 🍦🐾 - Ice Cream Monster is a nickname given to J.J. from Adam.

Therefore...

🐶❤️🍦🐾

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my friend J.J. Suffron. He is my best friend and known to me as the Ice Cream Monster. Right as I was going through the doubts of coming to graduate school, J.J. cheered me on and reminded me that my goals are very important. So, I went to graduate school and my artistry and life changed. However, during the last semester of school, J.J. was in an accident and is in a comatose state in Los Angeles, California. Being in Maryland during the most intensive semester, I was not able to go see him. I will do my best to go see him as soon as I can. However, he not only encouraged me to come to graduate school, but when my focus became the bear community for my work, he was more than willing to help me out. He was not only a subject of my work, but he also continuously communicated with me and encouraged me throughout the process. This changed on February 12, 2017. To clarify, he had a traumatic brain injury. He is just in a comatose state but not being sustained by machines. He is healing and has a long journey. Currently, due to his injuries there is no clear information as to whether or not he will completely recover back to his previous state before the incident. However, there are many people across the world sending positive thoughts his way. That being said, this is for J.J.

Thesis concluded.

However,

My Bearish Life...
continues!



